

# "Street Smarts"

## **STAYING AWAY FROM GANGS AND GUNS!**

### **Street Smarts reaches 7,000 students with anti-gang message**

The U.S. Attorney's Anti-Gang presentation – "Street Smarts," has reached 7,000 students in 52 schools and 14 youth groups in Rhode Island.

Begun in 2006, Street Smarts opens with a graphic and chilling "Roll Call" of young men and women, and boys and girls, killed by violence since 1994. The names of the victims, all age 30 or younger – the youngest 12 – scrolls up a screen as a New Orleans funeral dirge plays in the background.



*Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Rose speaks to students in the auditorium at Hugh B. Bain Middle School in Cranston*

The "Roll Call" is the introduction to a presentation by Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose, the anti-gang coordinator for the U.S. Attorney's Office. He has brought the presentation to high schools and middle schools in Providence, Cranston, Pawtucket, Woonsocket, Warwick, West Warwick, and East Greenwich.

The Street Smarts message is twofold: to debunk the myths that gang life is romantic and rewarding, and to show young people that there are alternatives to the gangster path.

"Gangs don't protect people," Mr. Rose warns. "Being in a gang actually increases the chances of being injured or killed. Gangs don't generate respect, they live on fear. Finally, gang members can get out, they can leave the gangs and lead normal lives. Of course, it's harder to get out than it is to get in, so the real message is don't get in."

The presentation also debunks other myths about gang life – gangsters don't drive fancy cars, or "live large." Pictures in the presentation of drug dealers' squalid apartments demonstrate that point. And the list of gang members who have gone to prison also debunks the mythical romance of gang life — life sentences for career drug traffickers, imprisonment for gun and explosives offenses.

To demonstrate the alternatives to gang life, the presentation identifies successful professionals – lawyers, doctors, college professors – who grew up in poor neighborhoods, made the right choices, and are leading productive lives.

***To arrange a Street Smarts presentation for  
your school or youth group, contact  
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